



Room to Roam

The simple charms of rural life—fresh air, more space, and a slower pace—beckoned Brooke and Steve Giannetti to create a magical oasis amid the rolling hills of Ojai.

INTERIOR DESIGN BY STEVE AND BROOKE GIANNETTI | ARCHITECTURE BY STEVE GIANNETTI
LANDSCAPE DESIGN BY STEVE GIANNETTI AND MARGARET GRACE, GRACE DESIGN
ASSOCIATES | PHOTOGRAPHY BY LISA ROMEREIN | WRITTEN BY FRANCES SCHULTZ



In the best of California living, outdoor spaces blend seamlessly with interiors. Lantern, Troy Lighting. OPPOSITE: Steve and Brooke Giannetti with donkeys Buttercup and Daisy.



Brooke and Steve Giannetti's Patina Farm in the small-town, artsy enclave of Ojai, California, is a story of choices, in design and in life. The husband-and-wife team—he's an architect, she's a decorator—made the decision a few years ago to leave the bustle of Los Angeles for a more rural setting. Though they did manage a small flock of chickens in their charming Santa Monica home, their menagerie has now expanded to include dogs, miniature donkeys, goats, and a rabbit. They also have three children, two of whom have left the nest.

While it's not a likely setting for Louis XVI or Limoges, the Giannettis' aesthetic is rigorous and disciplined. "We're not concerned with provenance so much as with what just appeals to us," says Steve. The couple's self-described "patina style" was the title of their first book and the inspiration for their West L.A. shop, Giannetti Home, as well as Brooke's acclaimed Velvet & Linen blog.

On four and a half acres of undulant meadow and pasture, the house nestles among cypress and oak, roses and lavender, boxwood gardens, meandering native plantings, and stone terraces that all look as if they've been tended through generations rather than started from scratch in 2012. Indeed, says Steve, first-time visitors invariably ask what was original and what was added on. Substituting narrative for history was the intent, however, with the happy bonus of new wiring and modern plumbing. It also defined criteria. "It was a way to make decisions," Steve says, "following the story of the building." Each part of the house and outbuildings called for materials consistent with its character; thus the stucco portions of the main house required a traditional tile roof, while the barn siding





Natural linen, sisal, and weathered wood give the living room a fresh, unfussy look. Coffee table in Verellen linen and settee in Libeco linen, Giannetti Home; sofa and pillow in Schumacher linen; window seat cushions in Claremont fabrics; wallpaper panels, Gracie; sisal rug, Merida; patterned rug, Jamal's Rug Collection. OPPOSITE, TOP: Dining table by BoBo Intriguing Objects; leather chairs and chandelier, Lucca Antiques; armchairs in Rogers & Goffigon linen, Giannetti Home; sconces, Aidan Gray; rug, Jamal's Rug Collection. OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: Vintage ceramic vases.



In the Details

Steve Giannetti designed a plaster mantel to frame the cooking niche, which recalls a castle's ancient, massive hearth. An inset cabinet above the side counter harbors the coffeemaker and toaster oven. The lack of upper cabinetry makes the space look less like a kitchen, the better to blend in with neighboring rooms. The dogs' bowls tuck into an arched niche at floor level.

Warm brass fittings and hardware mirror the honeyed tones of the custom white oak cabinetry and limestone backsplash. Stools in Perennials fabric, Hickory Chair; range, Lacanche; lanterns, South of Market; pendant lights, Schoolhouse Electric; sink, Signature Hardware; faucets, Barber Wilsons; pot rack, Morgik.





A collection of vintage watering cans and flowerpots decorates the chicken coop. Pendant lights, Barn Light Electric; vintage sink, Giannetti Home; faucet, Danze.






CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A profusion of white roses and lavender perfumes the landscape around the house. The kitchen garden. Custom banquette with cushions in a DeLany & Long fabric; chairs, Horchow; antique lantern, Marston Luce. Antique table, Rue de Lillie; dishes and glassware, Juliska.







The master bedroom's sumptuous furnishings are balanced by bare white walls that emphasize the surrounding landscape. Bedding, Libeco; pillows in Claremont fabrics; chaise, Giannetti Home; antique bench, chaise pillow, and curtains in Rogers & Goffigon fabrics; chandelier, Lucca Antiques; antique limestone mantel, Exquisite Surfaces.

Applied finishes and paint were used sparingly. "To make it look natural," says architect Steve Giannetti, "you have to leave it natural."



SCAN THIS PHOTO
TO HEAR AN INTERVIEW
WITH STEVE AND
BROOKE GIANNETTI



LEFT: Antique doors in Brooke's study keep computer equipment and clutter hidden when not in use. Antique side chairs, Giannetti Home; antique desk, Tara Shaw; antique lantern, Marston Luce. **BELOW:** Personal mementos grace the mantel in Steve's office. Chandelier, Circa Lighting; vintage rug, Pierre Lafond; art, Sidney Yard. **OPPOSITE:** Tub, the Bath Works; faucet and shower fixtures, Waterworks. For more details, see Sourcebook.

on the office paired with a corrugated-metal roof. Choices for hardware, fixtures, finishes, and furnishings flowed accordingly.

The rooms themselves, though, were designed from the inside out. "You first have to decide how you're going to live in the space," says Brooke. "For example, I wanted to be able to sit at my desk and look out at the garden." Steve conceived of the desired furniture arrangement for each area, then drew the room around it, allowing for adaptation as necessary. "We built the house to be able to use it as our family changed," she adds. "It's an open floor plan. The children's bedrooms are in a separate wing, so it still works when it's just Steve and me and the animals. There's not a space in this house we don't use."

It is an elegant utilitarianism reflected equally in the interiors. Steve, an East Coast scion of master-craftsmen plasterers, and Brooke, a native Southern Californian, artfully intertwined their creative DNA here in combining Belgian and Swedish antiques with rustic objects, rough-hewn materials, and natural fabrics in a soft, neutral palette. Applied finishes and paint were used sparingly, if at all. "To make it look natural, you have to leave it natural," says Steve. "So often, people want to seal and finish."

"We named it Patina Farm for a reason," Brooke explains. "It's the idea that you use natural materials and let them age gracefully over time—as I'm trying to do myself." □



FOR MORE ON THIS STORY, DOWNLOAD VERANDA ON YOUR TABLET